

Christy Peters
Chief of Staff
Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Christy Peters, Chief of Staff for the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, is one of the many women working for Thurston County making history.

Christy Peters began working for Thurston County as a Deputy Prosecuting trial attorney on May 1, 1995 after working in Pierce County as a Deputy Prosecuting attorney.

In 1996, Christy had her first of three children. When her daughter was 3 months old, she returned to work full time as a trial attorney. She and another female attorney became the first two practicing trial attorneys in Thurston County PAO with babies. She and the other attorney were able to share a nanny, recalls Christy, and because her home was closer to the courthouse at the time, the babies were cared for at her house during the day. Christy and the other attorney had just enough time to drive from the courthouse, nurse their babies and get back to work during their lunch hour.

Christy also recalled that there was no dedicated space other than her office to deal with new mother issues such as nursing. Prosecuting jury trials, immediately after returning to work from maternity leave, writing legal briefs and reading case files and traveling to her house to take care of her newborn on her lunch hour made for a busy day. Because of her experiences early in her career being a working mother, Christy has ensured that attorneys know when they come to Thurston County courts, new mothers will be provided a private space for any maternity needs. A former PAO legal intern who worked for the Attorney General's office was concerned about an upcoming jury trial at the Courthouse soon after she returned to work from maternity leave. Christy offered private attorney office space in the PAO for this attorney and any other nursing mother working in the courthouse.

As the Chief of Staff in the Prosecutor's office, Christy has created an environment where people thrive, especially women. The work of a criminal prosecutor is often a male dominated field; however, this is not the case in Thurston County. In 1996 15% of the criminal prosecutors were female, yet today over half of the criminal deputy prosecuting attorneys are female. Christy stated that she has been so fortunate to work for the supportive elected prosecutors she has, and she notes that many of her female colleagues in other areas of the state and country have had different experiences.

Christy has championed and developed an internship program in Thurston County throughout her career. When she began working for the county, she took the existing

internship program of 2-3 interns per year and with the support of Prosecutor Tunheim, she has developed the program into a robust internship program with approximately 10-15 law students participating each summer. The program is modeled after a Department of Justice internship program she participated in while in law school. Interns in Thurston County meet with Supreme Court Justices, Superior and District Court judges in addition to other attorneys and staff involved in the criminal justice system. The interns have an opportunity to do legal research, write briefs and gain courtroom experience. Several current DPAs including Prosecuting Attorney Jon Tunheim have participated in Thurston County's internship program.

In 2001, Christy was a founding member of the Monarch Child Justice and Advocacy Center with Superior Court Judge Indu Thomas, Prosecuting Attorney Jon Tunheim and other community leaders. Christy is very proud of the work that happens at the Monarch advocacy center and their contributions to the safety of children in our community.

Christy attended Willamette Law School and the University of Iowa. She is married with three wonderful children. Christy is very involved with the Thurston County community. She is a current board member of the Olympia School District Education Foundation and Creative Theatre Experience. She has served as President of the Olympia Rotary Club, President of the Junior League of Olympia, President of the South Sound Reading Foundation and President of the Washington State Government Lawyers Bar Association among other organizations she has worked with in the community.

Thank you, Christy, for making history in Thurston County!